

Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 1629. A bill to reauthorize the Department of Defense Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I am introducing the DEPSCoR Reauthorization Act of 2017 along with Senators ROUNDS, BROWN, COLLINS, CARPER, COONS, WHITEHOUSE, SHAHEEN, CORTEZ MASTO, and HIRONO.

The purpose of this bill is to ensure that we have universities in all 50 States capable of working with the Department of Defense on advanced research topics. A truly National network of university researchers who understand the needs of the Department of Defense puts us in the best possible position to respond to the ever-changing threats our armed forces face. This network will also meet the workforce needs of our defense laboratories by training graduate students in defense-relevant research. This bill reauthorizes the DEPSCoR program, which is modeled on the NSF's successful EPSCoR program for States that receive relatively low amounts of Federal science funding. The bill will focus the DEPSCoR program on defense research, while allowing the scientists and engineers of our defense laboratories to work directly with university researchers from DEPSCoR-eligible States.

Seven years ago, Congress asked the National Academy of Sciences to study the EPSCoR programs. The study concluded that it was in the National interest to engage scientific talent in all 50 States, and that EPSCoR programs were a valuable part of a National strategy to maintain global scientific leadership. The report emphasized that successfully engaging all 50 States required the involvement of technology-driven agencies, including the Department of Defense, to complement the basic science focus of the NSF.

Until 2009, the Department of Defense managed an EPSCoR-like program, known as DEPSCoR. An independent evaluation of DEPSCoR, conducted by the Institute for Defense Analyses, showed that DEPSCoR research contributed to the DoD mission, producing high-quality research and new technologies that were operationally deployed in areas such as missile guidance and communications.

DEPSCoR also successfully developed defense research capabilities in States historically underserved by Federal research and development (R&D) funding. Since DEPSCoR stopped receiving Congressional support, defense research in DEPSCoR-eligible States has plummeted, with the decreases far larger than the relatively modest amounts going to DEPSCoR awards. This shows that DEPSCoR was doing what Congress intended the program to do: develop competitive defense researchers in all 50 States.

The impact of cancelling DEPSCoR went far beyond research grants. Developing university research capabilities in all 50 States is critical to meeting DoD workforce needs. The Defense Laboratory Enterprise is more national in scope than NASA or the Department of Energy's National Laboratory system, with facilities in 24 States, including DEPSCoR-eligible States. The 2016 review of DoD laboratories by the Defense Science Board reported that these laboratories depend on locally trained scientists and engineers. Without relevant training provided through DoD-supported research projects at nearby universities, these facilities may struggle to find highly qualified scientists and engineers.

Because of these concerns, I have been working with my colleague on the Armed Services Committee, Senator ROUNDS of South Dakota, to revive this program. This reauthorization uses the lessons learned from the previous iteration of DEPSCoR to improve the program, making it more responsive to Department of Defense needs.

I invite our colleagues to join us in supporting this legislation.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

##### SENATE RESOLUTION 231—DESIGNATING JULY 30, 2017, AS “NATIONAL WHISTLEBLOWER APPRECIATION DAY”

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. TILLIS, Mrs. ERNST, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. PETERS, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 231

Whereas, in 1777, before the passage of the Bill of Rights, 10 sailors and marines blew the whistle on fraud and misconduct that was harmful to the United States;

Whereas the Founding Fathers unanimously supported the whistleblowers in words and deeds, including by releasing government records and providing monetary assistance for the reasonable legal expenses necessary to prevent retaliation against the whistleblowers;

Whereas, on July 30, 1778, in demonstration of their full support for whistleblowers, the members of the Continental Congress unanimously enacted the first whistleblower legislation in the United States that read: “*Resolved*, That it is the duty of all persons in the service of the United States, as well as all other the inhabitants thereof, to give the earliest information to Congress or other proper authority of any misconduct, frauds or misdemeanors committed by any officers or persons in the service of these States, which may come to their knowledge” (legislation of July 30, 1778, reprinted in *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789*, ed. Worthington C. Ford et al. (Washington, D.C., 1904–37), 11:732);

Whereas whistleblowers risk their careers, jobs, and reputations by reporting waste, fraud, and abuse to the proper authorities;

Whereas, in providing the proper authorities with lawful disclosures, whistleblowers

save the taxpayers of the United States billions of dollars each year and serve the public interest by ensuring that the United States remains an ethical and safe place; and

Whereas it is the public policy of the United States to encourage, in accordance with Federal law (including the Constitution of the United States, rules, and regulations) and consistent with the protection of classified information (including sources and methods of detection of classified information), honest and good faith reporting of misconduct, fraud, misdemeanors, and other crimes to the appropriate authority at the earliest time possible: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) designates July 30, 2017, as “National Whistleblower Appreciation Day”; and

(2) ensures that the Federal Government implements the intent of the Founding Fathers, as reflected in the legislation enacted on July 30, 1778, by encouraging each executive agency to recognize National Whistleblower Appreciation Day by—

(A) informing employees, contractors working on behalf of United States taxpayers, and members of the public about the legal right of a United States citizen to “blow the whistle” to the appropriate authority by honest and good faith reporting of misconduct, fraud, misdemeanors, or other crimes; and

(B) acknowledging the contributions of whistleblowers to combating waste, fraud, abuse, and violations of laws and regulations of the United States.

#### AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 262. Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. SASSE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1519, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 263. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1519, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 264. Mr. McCAIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1628, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2017; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 265. Mr. McCAIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1628, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 266. Mr. McCAIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1628, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 267. Mr. McCONNELL proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1628, supra.

SA 268. Mr. WHITEHOUSE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1628, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 269. Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. BROWN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. COONS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, and Ms. HIRONO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2810, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.